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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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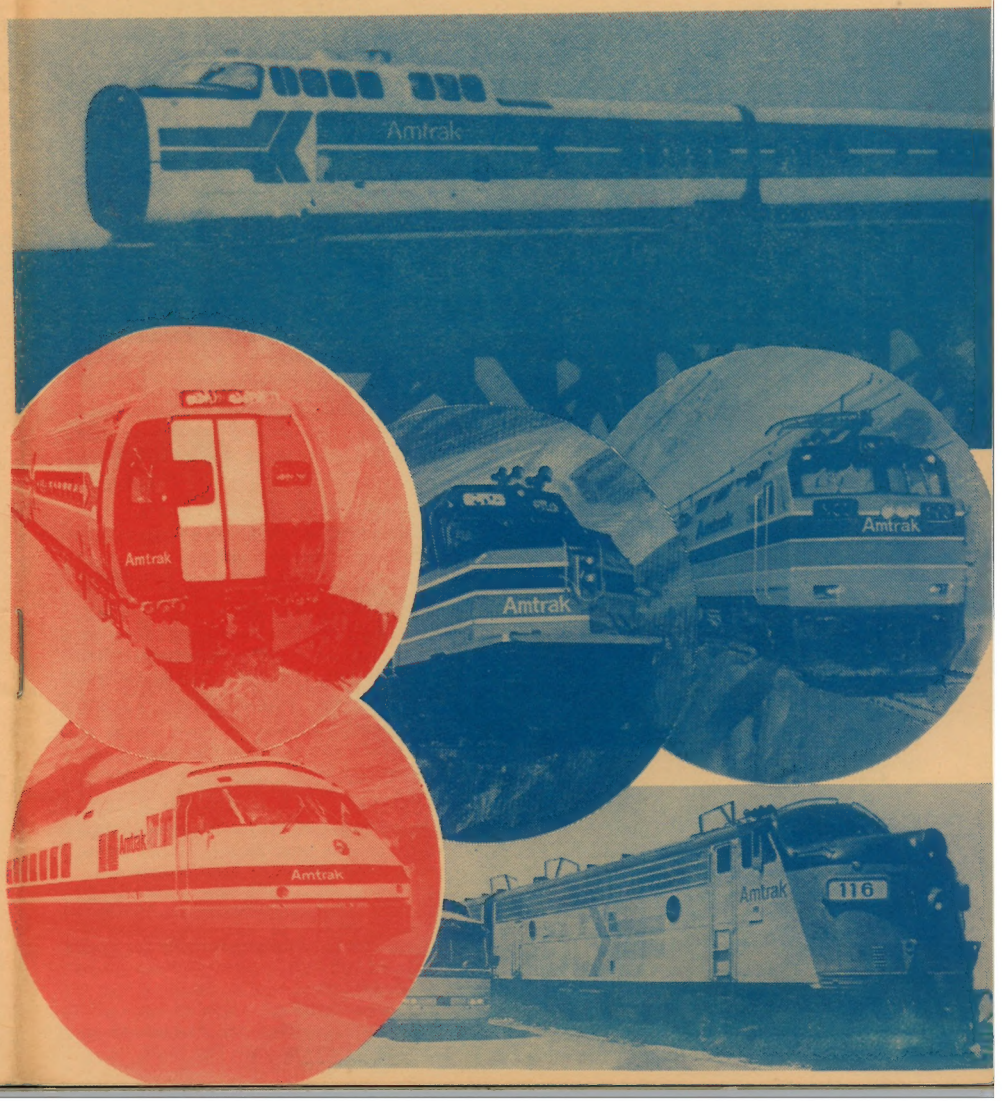
AMTRAK'S THIRTEENTH ANNIVERSARY



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EAST COAST REPORT

By Theodore W. Scull

David Gunn, New York City Transit Authority president and a daily rider of the system he runs, had his commuting diary published in the New York Times Apr 16. He chose to report his experiences on 13 days between Mar 14 and Apr 4 that ranged from on-time rides on relatively clean trains to delays that caused him to be late for a meeting and to miss a flight.

Most of his riding takes place on the IND F Line in Brooklyn from his home to his office at Jay Street and from there via the Lexington Avenue IRT Line to MTA headquarters in Manhattan. He also wrote about using the subway to reach Penn Station to connect with an Amtrak train to Philadelphia, to Grand Central for the 7:30am BEAR MOUNTAIN to Albany and a subway/bus combination to reach La Guardia Airport.

While his experiences are hardly unique, the overview was worthwhile reading, and it is most gratifying to know that the head of the T.A. has first-hand knowledge of the system he operates.

Four days later, Mr. Gunn reported that he was delaying the implementation of some of the T.A.'s major capital programs until he is able to reorganize the projects' supervision. The present muddle often has management personnel working at cross-purposes. Under the new plan, a project manager, for instance, would be responsible for all the work at a particular site rather than having one group do the design and another make the inspections.

A New York Times article on transit advertising indicated that its appeal in the market place is growing, for a number of reasons. Advertisers on New York's 6000 subway cars and 3300 buses and in the hundreds of stations have a mass captive audience, frequently exposed to relatively low-cost cards. Certain special markets are easily targeted, as with using the sides of Manhattan buses for promoting Broadway shows.

Interestingly, deteriorating service has meant that riders have extra time to look at the ads while waiting for their train to arrive and during the slower and longer trips. The M.T.A. earned $14.6 million from transit advertising in 1983.

All three major newspapers reported extensive drug sales in several subway stations and on some trains. The biggest market places are the IND Station at 42nd Street and 8th Avenue, and the IRT and BMT Stations at 14th Street and Union Square. On the trains, the last car is often referred to as the smoking or parlor car.

★★★

The T.A. reported that the illegal use of slugs and Connecticut Turnpike tokens has risen 50% since the transit fare rose from 75 to 90 cents on Jan 1, costing the system about $1 million a year in revenues. The offenders, who range from business executives to the unemployed, are subject to $1000 fines and up to one year in jail.

★★★

(continued on page 23)

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ON THE COVER

Our cover, on the occasion of Amtrak's thirteenth anniversary, which occurs on May 1, 1984, presents illustrations of Amtrak equipment of past and present, all taken from Amtrak timetables and brochures. See our editorial on Amtrak's anniversary, in this issue.

LETTERS

We are delighted to have played a small part in the reinstitution of rail passenger service between New Orleans and Mobile commencing Apr 29. We are writing this letter, however, to advise RTN readers that the GULF COAST LIMITED service as proposed is failure-oriented. This route has no chance whatsoever to live up to any market potential.

First and foremost, the route fails because it doesn't go far enough—to eastern seaboard endpoints. The State of Florida has refused to recognize this route's potential as a feeder to the current Amtrak Florida services. This is ironic in several respects. When we started out back in the mid-70's to work for the return of New Orleans-Jacksonville service, Floridians openly stated that the weak financial link on the route were the poor sister states: Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. We now know the converse to be true, particularly when Floridians have the most to gain from this route. The current argument that the train's schedule is not conducive to intrastate ridership is pure malarky. Intra-state ridership does not begin and end at Pensacola and/or Jacksonville. What happened to the other eight million Floridians? There are several states which have in fact funded 403(b) services which traverse certain route segments at inconvenient times. There is good reason to believe restoration of the GULF WIND route would far outpace the SILVER PALM for PM/TM's and revenues. And, given a fair trial on 403(b), regional Congressmen would probably work to make it a system link by law.

Another ill-conceived aspect is the proposed eastbound schedule for the GCL. It departs New Orleans far too early in the evening. If the service is meant for World's Fair patronage, it should obviously depart as late as possible to permit the most time in New Orleans yet arrive at the end point, Mobile, before midnight. Subsequently, the GCL could leave New Orleans two full hours later than is currently proposed (6:30pm). An 8:25pm departure would afford would-be fairgoers, sports fans, shoppers and commuters two more hours of Daylight Savings Time sunshine to spend their bucks in the Crescent City. Passengers aboard super-secret SUNSET could even connect with the GCL now and then.

The fares offered on the new route are enough to guarantee doom. They rank right up there with the gold-plated Metroliners. In fact, on a cost per mile basis, higher than most NE Corridor and all other short hauls. We noted that the full fare Mobile-New Orleans roundtrip exceeds the annual per capita incomes of several nations exhibiting at the Fair. Yet the same countreis have better intercity national services than America overall.

Thus, the GULF COAST LIMITED fails as a long haul and as a short haul too. Score this service a perfect "10" for failing to meet any viable need. Don't be surprised to hear the usual litany from Amtrak when it fails to make the criteria.

The Ant Hill Mob
(Names withheld)

With the withdrawal of all VIA service from Montreal's Windsor Station, it would appear that the time is right for Amtrak to review the continued use of that facility by the ADIRONDACK, which is the only non-commuter train left there.

It would seem that a switch to Central Station would be advantageous for several reasons, not the least of which would be to eliminate the confusion over which station Amtrak uses in Montreal. In addition, passengers connecting with VIA service to and from Toronto, Ottawa, Quebec and other Canadian points could do so without changing stations. Central Station is a completely modern facility, with every imaginable service available, including indoor access to hotels, restaurants and shopping.

A recen trip on the ADIRONDACK revealed a junction at Rouses Point which appeared to be well-used as a freight interchange with CN. The distance from Rouses Point to Central Station is about 45 miles, which compares to 41 miles to Windsor Station. Only five miles would be over track currently designated as freight-only, as the first junction point is Cantic, which lies on the route of the MONTREALER.

I was not able to ascertain the condition of the CN roadbed from Rouses Point to Cantic, but it can hardly be much worse than the existing ADIRONDACK route from Rouses Point to Delson, Que., where connection is made with CP. The line appears to be frequently used for freight interchange with the Delaware and Hudson, and a speed limit of only 30 or 40mph would probably be acceptable over this 5-mile stretch of track.

All things considered, the schedule might be the same as at present, or even a few minutes faster.

John J. Harmon
Lawrenceville, New Jersey

I must comment on several items in RTN 289. Whatever equipment "savings" Amtrak will make when the Florida schedule flip-flops are made will surely lose as much intercity service featured within the Sunshine State. Anyone in central Florida wanting to travel to cities such as Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and Palm Beach will no longer be able to do it without an overnight stay or inconvenient midday arrivals. Add this to hourly cutrate air fares between central and south Florida, and the fact that Amtrak, in their infinite wisdom , has never acknowledged the

existence of SILVER STAR intra-state services, and an enormous market share of tourist/business travel is gone.

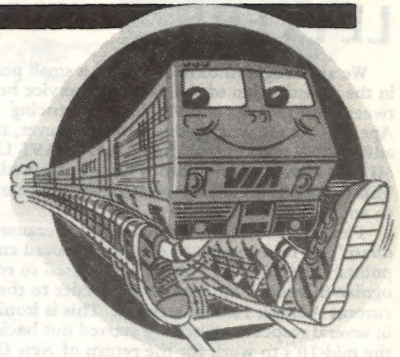
We see SILVER PALM media advertising often here, but somehow nobody wants to ride a bus from central Florida cities to Winter Haven to catch a train to Miami. Never has one ad alluded to the fact that there is a direct train daily with a convenient early morning departure to /late evening arrival from Miami/Tampa. Only a SILVER PALM bus route. Excursion fares ditto.

If Amtrak has a real equipment problem, then why are cars being needlessly sold off to Alaska and/or sitting around AUTO TRAIN coach yards?

Looks like the only sensible thing that is going to happen (accident?) soon on Amtrak is the RIVER CITIES. That route should have a good opportunity for success. Now, if one could only get between New Orleans and Florida....

Steve Evans
Maitland, Florida

RAIL CANADA



VIA RAIL CANADA has applied to the CTC to discontinue overnight service between Toronto and Ottawa as of Aug 1—the Toronto-Ottawa section of the CAVALIER. Transport 2000 Ontario stated its opposition to this cutback in an Apr 27 press release. Said T-2000, "Urgent action is necessary to prevent the CTC from granting VIA permission *without* a public hearing. Please write to request a public hearing... Write to the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Transport, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario I1A 0A6 with a copy to Mr. John O'Hara, SEcretary, Railway Transport Committee, Canadian Transport Commission, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N9. Copy of the letter should also be sent to Mr. G. Roiter, General Counsel, Legal Services, VIA Rail Canada, Box 8116, Sta. A, Montreal, Quebec, H3C 3N3.

"SPRING TRAINING" CONTEST is being held on a number of Eastern Canada radio stationsin conjunction with VIA, and is the source of the VIA LRC train logo shown above. Prizes in the contest are VIA trips and other awards. Entries are made thru blanks handed out with VIA tickets. Drawings will be made between May 21 & 25.

"ATLANTIC" RESTORATION EFFORT by rail supporters is making headway. Transport Minister Lloyd Axworthy wrote recently to the Maine Rail Group (Bangor) that he has asked VIA to study a proposal by the Coalition For Improved Rail Passenger Service that would restore the train, within VIA's budgetary limitations. Axworthy said that VIA will complete their study by June, and his general approach to the question seemed quite positive.

VIA RAIL PRESIDENT Pierre Franche has recommended that the Canadian government build a high-speed TGV-like line between Montreal and Toronto via Ottawa. This would cost an estimated $2.5 billion Canadian. The recommendation is the outcome of a $5 million study commissioned by VIA in 1981 at the request of the Canadian government. The study was aided by French, Japanese and British engineers, who studied the use of existing rights of way for the line.

BOMBARDIER WILL CLOSE its Montreal locomotive factory unless it can merge with another manufacturer to counter competition from General Motors and General Electric. Bombardier's employees now number 650, compared to 1000 in January. The loss of two contracts recently (one for the Singapore Metro and one with Alstlom-Atlantique for a TGV technology transfer) apparently prompted the statement from Bombardier president Laurent Beaudoir.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAIL has applied for abandonment of its Ottawa-Montreal line between Blackburn Hamlet, Ont. and Rigaud, Que. The Prescott-Russell Regional Development Association and the Ottawa Transport-2000 are opposed to the abandonment. Rumors abound that VIA would like to use the Vankleek-Hill-Ottawa section for high-speed tests.

TRANSPORT MINISTER AXWORTHY has stated that railway improvements, costing billions, must constitute the "cornerstone" of a complete rebuilding of Canada's transport systems.

VIA'S GREATEST THREAT in the Corridor—the STOL service—is in trouble. The Montreal company that is planning the STOL air service has been given until Jun 30 to get the service running. This will probably be impossible, and will cause the grounding of the service. Rail supprters note that the protracted stalling of the STOL might allow VIA time to get its act together and provide a competitive service in the Corridor. The STOL is a guaranteed money-loser, rail advocates have long argued.

TRANSPORT 2000 PRESIDENT Guy Chartrand says that VIA will refurbish 75 to 80 passenger cars, and *will convert them to electric HEP.* The cost will be $50 million. They may run on Maritime-Montreal runs and perhaps elsewhere until new equipment arrives, in about the year 1990.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

A HOUSE BILL by Congressman Glenn M. Anderson of Harbor City CA passed the Public Works subcommittee he chairs, on May 2. It would increase Federal funding for transit systems from $1.1 billion to $1.5 billion, the rationale being that the government is collecting more gas tax money to pay for this than it admits. The measure has an uncertain future in the Senate, tho it is said to have good prospects for passage in the House. Los Angeles metro system planners were particularly elated over this news, as it could lead to their receiving more money than they've been told they'll get this year. On Apr 26 Los Angeles lowered its request for subway funds from the Feds to $234 million, from $336 million, in response to declarations that UMTA would not have enough to cover the expected 62% funding of the planned system. The Anderson bill also extends the authorization to spend gas tax money for transit one year, until 1987. Currently, the authorization is set to expire after 1986. With $400 million more in the pot each year for the next four years, it would mean that transit projects would have available a total of $1.6 billion more funding.

PENINSULA RAIL 2000, a rail advocacy group seeking to improve the Caltrain San Francisco Peninsula line, has the following issue papers available for the prices listed: The 5-Point Plan, $2; Capital and Operating Plan, $3; Financial Plan and Patronage Projections, $2; Institutional Arrangements, $3; and Freight Issues, $2. They are available from the organization at PO Box 3552, San Francisco CA 94119.

THE WASHINGTON FLYER bus system, linking Dulles International and Washington National airports with 62 Washington-area locations began operation May 1. The system uses 14 new luxury buses and 28 new minibuses, and nearly 100 new taxicabs. The service is operated by Air Transit, Inc. It will provide service between the airports and downtown Washington and suburban locations including Tysons Corner VA, Bethesda, Silver Spring and Wheaton MD.

NUMBER ONE PROBLEM in the minds of San Francisco Bay Area citizens is poor transportation—surpassing concern over crime or unemployment, according to a Bay Area Council poll released in April. The San Francisco Chronicle on Apr 23 presented good coverage of this problem, including an article that stated that the solution is getting people out of their autos and in mass transit.

YAKIMA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION Co., the electrically operated subsidiary of UP in Washington State, announced in late April that it has applied to abandon its entire 20-mile route due to declining carloadings. The announcement came after a combination road-track switching vehicle was declared a failure in experiments which would have allowed retirement of the line's two vintage electric locomotives. A UP spokesman said abandonment proceedings would take about a year, and that UP plans to donate the system, locomotives, power plants and all, to the city of Yakima. The line was built in 1907 and is used by "heritage" trolleys acquired in Portugal, which are operated for tourists in the summer months.

SENATOR MARK HATFIELD was keynote speaker at the dedication of the new Portland OR Tri-Met Ruby Junction shops Apr 18. Hatfield called the 15-mile light-rail project an undertaking which helps make America great. On hand were the first of 26 new light rail cars from Bombardier.

EDITORIAL

ON THE OCCASION OF AMTRAK'S THIRTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

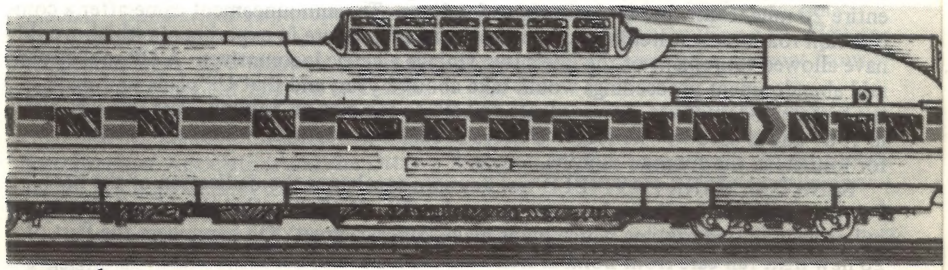
On this thirteenth anniversary of Amtrak, we feel compelled to ask just what is the problem with the rail passenger corporation these days?

Never in the history of Amtrak, except in the Roger Lewis era, has there been such dissatisfaction expressed with Amtrak's leadership. And, ironically, this comes at a time when Amtrak's fortunes are running high. Amtrak has more new equipment on the rails than at any other time in its history. Amtrak has never had such a secure funding arrangement with the Federal government. The Federal Railroad Administrator, a rail supporter, is very favorable toward Amtrak. Patronage is high and rising. On-board services are improving and may be better than they have been in a number of years. A number of new routes and new and modified services are being added to the system, including the novel and exciting AUTO TRAIN operation. And yet many rail advocates have been calling for Amtrak President Claytor's head. Just what is wrong?

We believe that the problem is that Amtrak has undergone a fundamental policy shift under Mr. Claytor. Amtrak is, of course, a quasi-national corporation, like the U.S. Postal Service. It's set up to run like a private corporation, with the efficiencies that a private company can muster, and at the same time be supported by government funding and overseen by Federal legislators and the Department of Transportation. Congress set Amtrak up that way quite deliberately so as to create in effect a Federal agency that would operate the nation's passenger trains in the interests of the entire nation, a task that Congress knew would not be profitable—at least not immediately—and thus would require governmental help. But it also set Amtrak up to run as much as possible like a private corporation so that it would operate in a way that tends to produce profits and efficiency, so as to move in the direction of eventual profits, or at least to minimize the amount of Federal support that would be required.

All thru its existence, Amtrak has been required to thread a thin line between acting like a Federal agency and like a private corporation. Its style of so acting depended largely on the style of its topmost leaders at any given time. Under President Alan Boyd, we feel, it achieved the most balanced operation in this respect. Under President Paul Reistrup it may have acted most like a Federal agency. But under Graham Claytor it clearly acts more like a private corporation than it ever has. It is well-known that Claytor is a "bottom-line" leader, with his eye steadfastly on Amtrak's bottom line, which is the Congressionally-scrutinized measure, revenue-to-cost ratio.

Acting more like a private corporation can generally be considered a commendable thing, especially if one is to gain the favor of an incumbent Republican administration. And Amtrak's recent performance places it in a very good position vis-a-vis Congress and the administration. NARP Executive Director Ross Capon noted in an April 17 report: "The reported economic performance of the entire system is so good that legislators often find it difficult to take seriously the arguments of those who argue that the direction of Amtrak's management is seriously flawed."

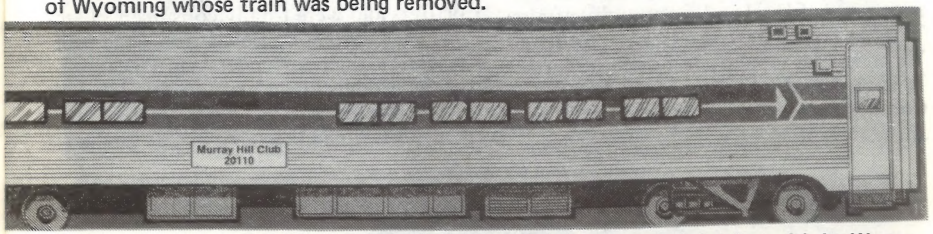


There are two problems with this, however. First, Amtrak may not be operating under a conservative administration indefinitely, but may encounter one that weighs delivery of service more heavily than bottom-line performance. Second, the style of Amtrak's present simulation of a private corporation may be taken to something of an extreme. The area in which this latter abuse occurs is in Amtrak's relations with its constituents.

Private corporations have customers. Amtrak, as a quasi-governmental corporation, has both customers and constituents. These can, of course, be the same individuals acting in different roles. What Amtrak has tended to forget recently is that there are constituents to whom it must relate, and not only customers. A customer becomes a constituent when he or she writes a letter about Amtrak to a legislator or other government official.

Amtrak's relations with its constituents have been moving from bad to worse in the past year or so. Let us take an example of Amtrak mishandling of constituent relations.

When Amtrak decided to move the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR from its route thru Wyoming to the Rio Grande route thru the Colorado Rockies, this decision could have been regarded as a good business decision, one that would attract more customers so as to make them repeat customers. If Amtrak had been merely a private corporation, it probably could have gotten away with simply moving the train. However, since it is not merely a private corporation, it was obliged to consider the needs of the people of Wyoming whose train was being removed.



What happened was that Amtrak did a terrible job of communicating with its Wyoming constituents, neither appearing to consider their needs nor to explain to them its position and apologize for the less than satisfactory outcome of the switch (as perceived by Wyoming citizens). This is the way the railroad robber barons of old would have acted, but for Amtrak to do this when it depends in part on Wyoming citizens and Wyoming legislators for about half of its financial support, seems way out of line.

We could move on to the disastrous case of the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA. There, Amtrak once more failed to communicate with its California constituents as it allowed the train to be discontinued, after promising that it would do something to help it.

In recent months Amtrak has alienated its constituents in Wyoming, California, Oklahoma and Texas. In addition, Amtrak watchers in other states have been angered in sympathy with these citizens. We are told that rail advocates in Washington State are becoming very disillusioned with Amtrak, and this feeling seems also to be spilling over into the state of Oregon. Citizens of St. Petersburg, Florida likewise are not happy with Amtrak changes in their locality.

In large part, as we have implied, this problem is a public relations problem. While it is true that Amtrak has been doing what people of these states consider dumb things to their Amtrak service, most of the problems could have been resolved to a large extent by proper communication with the peoples involved.

Amtrak, as never before, seems to be operating like a big, faceless, private corporation, run from the head office with the uppermost thought being what can be done to improve the bottom line. But rail passenger service in the United States has not yet reached the point where it can dispense with government support, and thus with the support of its constituents.

There are two aspects to this problem. One is that decisions have been too often made from the head office without adequate knowledge of conditions in the field or the needs and desires of the local constituents. The second is that communication with

(continued on page 19)

The Gulf Coast's First Runs

BY ADRON F. HALL

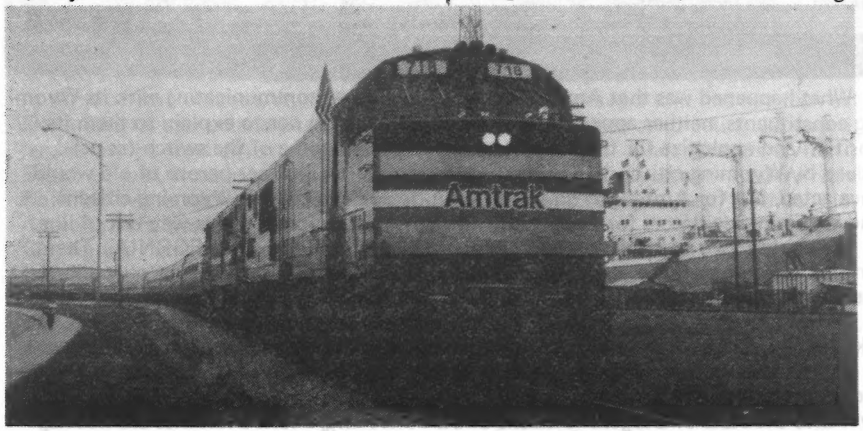
An Amtrak official exclaimed that it was the biggest event of its kind Amtrak had ever hosted. He was referring to the inaugural run of the GULF COAST LIMITED from Mobile to New Orleans.

The giant, rolling party began with much fanfare in Mobile at 8:45am on Apr 28. Eighteen beautiful girls dressed in old-fashioned Southern Belle hoop skirts graced the area round the stage as they gave out programs. In addition, the gathering crowd was entertained by a band near the stage and a group of barbershop singers on the train-loading platform.

The crowd of about 300 heard comments from various officials on the stage including Wick Leatherwood, Amtrak's supervisor of local and community affairs; Thomas P. Hackney, Amtrak's Executive VP and Chief Operations Officer; Charles T. Pace, LA-MS-AL Rapid Rail Transit Commission chairman; and Robert B. Doyle Jr., Mayor of Mobile.

for the rail service.

The 13-car inaugural train was christened at the coupler of Amtrak's car 10,000; the crowd of reporters and remaining passengers was loaded, and the 5½-hour rolling party departed at 9:46am. This was not just an inaugural train—it was a celebration. The Tri-State Rapid Rail Commission had worked untold hours—literally sweated blood and met obstacles at all corners in getting the train established; Amtrak pulled out all the stops for this celebration; and with a large contingent of party-prone New Orleanians aboard, the crowd which swelled to nearly 800 by Gulfport, was in a celebration mood. Over 3000 finger sandwiches were passed on platters and were totally consumed. Famous Pat O'Brians of New Orleans had sent several of their bartenders and 16 gallons of the establishment's official World's Fair drink, Bayou Blaster. It was all gone by Gulfport. In addition, Amtrak's lounge



The inaugural run of the GULF COAST LTD awaits departure from Seaboard station building in downtown Mobile AL on Apr 28. Photo by Jim Selzer.

Standing quietly in the crowd of onlookers, Steve Evans of Orlando FL was enjoying immensely the proceedings. While living in Gautier MS, Steve had initiated the idea of a Gulf Coast train in 1976, and now was seeing his dream unfold before him. A subsequent feasibility study launched by Hank Crisman of the Jackson County (MS) Planning Commission drew considerable attention with the excellent projections it cited

attendants served $2000 worth of mixed drinks. Entertainment included the Ethel Merwin Band—five women playing instruments and singing in one end of the Amlounge. The lively drummer was 82 years young. The Mobile Chapter of the SPFBSQSA, Inc., (Barbershop singers) dispatched relays of quartets to each stop, where they would board the train to relieve the previously-boarded group.

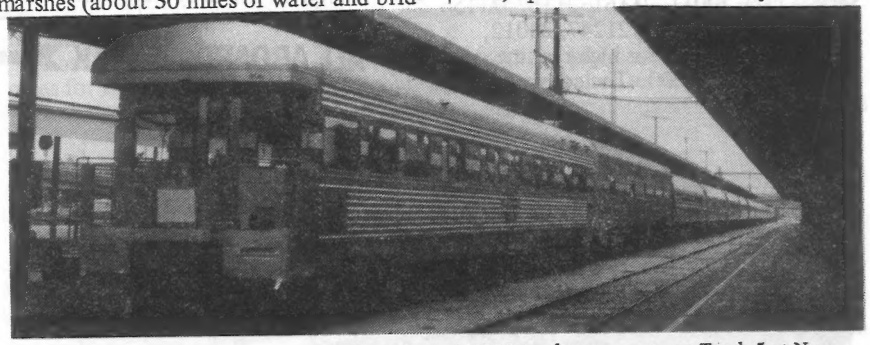
At each station stop, large crowds were gathered to welcome the new train, having been entertained up to an hour before arrival by various bands, dancers and singers. The train riders were surprised to see the largest crowd of greeters at the smallest town, Waveland MS, which borders Bay St. Louis. Waveland had won a battle for the station stop when Bay St. Louis couldn't convince Seaboard System to lease part of the old station for passenger use. Waveland then built a facility including shelter, platform, and large parking area.

After a swift ride across the coastal marshes (about 30 miles of water and bridges skirting Lakes Borgne and Pontchartrain) the train arrived in the New Orleans East station, a large wooden, open-air structure recently constructed in 18 days by a contingent of proud, local builders.

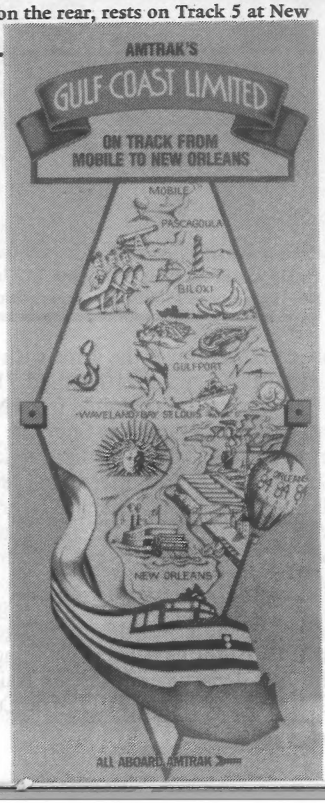
The train was halted half way backing down Track 5 in New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal (NOUPT) to allow the news media to hop off, run down to the terminal and photograph the train arriving in New Orleans. Arrival was at 2:55pm, greeted by a New Orleans-style street jazz band. Most of the arriving passengers boarded 15 chartered RTA buses to transfer to the World's Fair site for a reception and ride on the Fair monorail.

A brief history of rail service on the Mobile-New Orleans route reveals that the first line was completed in 1870 by the New Orleans, Mobile and Chattanooga Railroad. Construction delays were encountered due to the numerous waterways, marshy land, climate and the toredo, a waterborne, wood-eating insect. (Bridges are now mostly concrete.) In the early 1880s, the Louisville & Nashville Railroad assumed control of the line. Among famous passenger trains on the route were the NEW ORLEANS LTD, PAN AMERICAN, and HUMMINGBIRD, from Cincinnati, and the GULF WIND from Jacksonville. All passenger service on the line ceased in 1971 with the advent of Amtrak.

The GULF COAST LIMITED is unusual in that it is funded by a tri-state 403(b) contract, a first for Amtrak. Each state (LA, MS and AL) appropriated $166,000 to fund the 5-month operation during the World's Fair. The Tri-State Rapid Rail Commission is now working to secure funding for operation beyond the Sep 30, 1984 cutoff date. Also, operation of the train beyond Mobile,



The inaugural train equipment, with Amtrak car 10,000 on the rear, rests on Track 5 at New Orleans on Apr 27. Photo by Jim Selzer.



either to Montgomery and Birmingham, or to Jacksonville (if Florida will join the commission) is a possibility.

The inaugural train was ferried from New Orleans to Mobile on Friday, Apr 27. It departed NOUPT at 1:10pm and traveled nonstop, except for a brief halt in Gulfport, to arrive in Mobile at 4:33pm. One P-30 engine powered the train of 13 cars at speeds up to 79mph, giving the approximately 200 riders (New Orleanians traveling to Mobile for the inaugural and Friday night reception) a smooth and enjoyable trip. The consist was: engine 718; cars 21933 (Metroliner Service car), 20011, 21161, 21167, 21155, 28021, 21102, 21213, 21247, 28012, 21150, 2234 (suites for high-ranking state officials), and 10,000. The consist of the inaugural train was the same with the addition of P-30 engine 710 behind 718.

Scene of the train's christening, at Mobile on Apr 28. Photo by Steve Evans.

ALL ABOARD AMTRAK

Freshly-painted Amtrak engine 718 heads a consist of 13 cars that has just deadheaded from New Orleans to Mobile in preparation for the inaugural run. Date: Apr 27. Photo by Jim Selzer.

A return trip to Mobile from NOUPT ran Saturday evening to ferry the equipment for the start of regular service on Sunday. Of course, there were several hundred inaugural passengers to return to the Mississippi cities and Mobile. That train departed NOUPT at 6:09pm and arrived in Mobile at 9:52pm.

The 29th of April dawned bright and early (one hour lost due to change to Daylight time) for passengers planning to board the 7am departure of Amtrak train 23, the GULF COAST LIMITED. The Cunard freighter "Carmania" was still berthed a couple hundred yards from the station—it was there for the previous day's ceremonies. The Mobile docks are a scenic plus for the Mobile station, with the Del Monte banana docks just to the east. About 125 passengers boarded with two large groups traveling to New Orleans. Number 23 had a smooth and uneventful first run, arriving at NOUPT six minutes early with 196 passengers. Its consist was: engines 718, 710; cars 21933, 20011, 21161, 21167, 21155, 28021, 21102, 21247, 28012 and 21150.

Everyone connected with the GULF COAST LIMITED wishes it well. May its run be long and prosperous!

The First California Metroliner

BY PETER PUTNAM BRETZ

The name "California Metroliner" brings forth visions of Hollywood, glamour, sun-drenched skies, waving palms, and beach bunnies cavorting on the warm sands close by the tracks of the Santa Fe which carry the many SAN DIEGANS to and fro. And now the new Metroliners too. But *Metro*-liner? That's an Eastern name. One thinks of corridors, a zillion trains on four-track rights of way, Park Avenue, Washington DC, big dirty cities, and...speed. Somehow, a Metroliner doesn't seem to belong here in laid-back California.

If the purpose was luxury and not speed, we would name than "Oceanliners". However, Art Lloyd, Amtrak Western Region Public Affairs Director, says "The Metroliners cannot compete on speed with airliners, but can offer luxury and comfort and a moderate amount of speed."

Those knowledgeable in rail support circles have been prognosticating dreadful outcomes for the new trains. They predict an early withdrawal of service, another New England Metroliner debacle. But we shouldn't be too quick to condemn. After all, it is the first time in memory that the San Diego line has had a true express train. Amtrak has dared to incur the wrath of special interests who are concerned only that the train stops at *their* station. Amtrak had the guts to try out the New England Metroliner, and the California Metroliners have great potential.

The first trains ran on Sunday, April 29, when everyone was away for the weekend and there are no 6:00 o'clock news deadlines, so the inaugural press run was held on Monday, April 30. I decided to try out the train on its actual first run, where only regular passengers and some railfans may lurk.

I made advance reservations to San Diego (a first), and arrived at Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal at 2:30pm. Lines of people were getting last-minute tickets for the 2:50pm SAN DIEGAN departure. Behind the ticket counters was a large sign reading "Ask About Amtrak's Metroliner Service." A similar, larger sign hung over the concourse "To Trains" area. Elegant Metroliner brochures were in the racks around the station. And a new Metroliner Lounge had appeared inside the waiting room. It is only a roped-off section containing a number of the regular substantial seats, but there is also a table with cups and coffee and ""Metroliner Service"-printed napkins. The lounge

The inaugural press run of the California Metroliner pulls into San Diego on Apr 30. On the left is seen the equipment of a Santa Fe inspection train. On the right, a mural of the Tijuana Trolley decorates Jerry's snack bar on the track side of the station. Photos by the author.

area is labeled "reserved" with a red sign and " Metroliner Lounge" with a blue sign. It opened at 3pm and this writer was the first to enter it.

Sipping coffee, I looked around. New additions since our last visit, besides the lounge, included pay-to-use smart-carts, more potted trees, and TV monitors showing arrivals and departures (but they were a little hard to read). The clocks in the station showed the wrong time, but periodic announcements gave the correct time. About 20 people showed up in the lounge, and most of them sipped coffee too.

At 3:39pm the public address announced the new California Metroliner, and we all trundled down the tunnel to the trains. Crowds of people poured past us, just off SAN DIEGAN 583, which had arrived 13mins early. Up on the platform there was a surprise: the five-car Metroliner train contained two 60-seat Amfleet coaches sporting the "Metroliner Service" logo on their sides. They had just arrived on the rear of train 3, fresh from the shops at Wilmington.

The consist of the first Metroliner was: F40 engine 222, cars 21270, 21212, Amdinette 20226, 21900 and 21901. I took a seat in the first car. They have been completely refurbished inside, with blue carpeting and seat upholstery. Headrests sport the monogrammed logo. Seat back pouches contained a beverage list and a copy of Amtrak's "Express" magazine.

The smoking car was running a little hot, but all was well with the rest of the train. I met some friends I hadn't seen for a while, and settled down for good conversation amid unexpected luxury. At 3:55pm a plate appeared on the tray in front of us, and a minute later some hors d'oeuvres appeared on the plate. We munched thick wedges of salami, Swiss cheese, raw vegetables, etc.

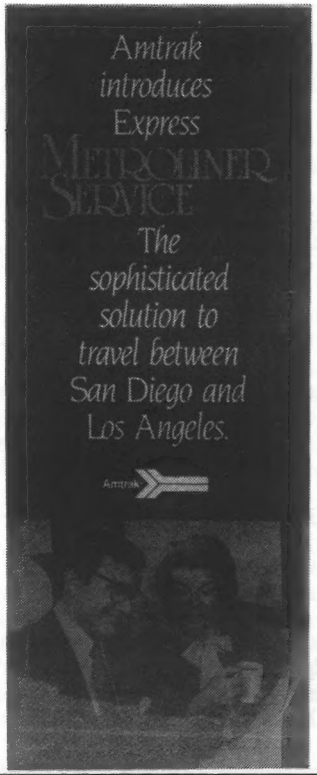
Backout time was 4:00 on the dot, and already we were feeling mellow. Racing south past the coach yards, we spotted the equipment of tonight's SUNSET LIMITED, with the first (revived) transcontinental sleeper, 10-6 no. 2884 with no name on the side (it's ex-UP "Pacific Slope"). Soon a beverage cart rolled up to our seat, and I selected a complimentary 7-UP. The brochure read: "Soft drinks, juices, coffee, tea and Sanka are available at all times—compliments of Amtrak." By this time, finger-sandwiches were being carried down the aisle—chicken, tuna, roast beef. We looked out the window and watched Fullerton whiz past.

The stop at Anaheim came right on time at 4:41pm, and about six people boarded. A baseball game was being played at adjacent Anaheim Stadium, and we could just barely hear the roar of the crowd. One passenger, in fact, boarded wearing an Angels cap and jacket. We were very pleased to see the on-board personnel scurrying up and down the aisle, loaded with food and drink. Service was continuous.

I was deep in conversation as we flashed by Santa Ana (a first for me), and later we passed San Juan Capistrano and glided to a stop at Serra siding at 5:10pm. A meet with northbound no. 582 was scheduled, but here, not at San Onofre where it "should" be. An announcement was made that we are waiting for a passenger train. We sat for 15mins, finally getting going at 5:25pm.

Opposite page: On Apr 30 the inaugural press train waits for time at Del Mar after arriving there five minutes early.

Right: Cover of Metroliner folder issued for the new San Diego service.



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Conductor Sam Cannon helped passengers aboard the inaugural press train on Apr 30.

We ran along the ocean beach now, as biniki-clad beach bunnies cavorted. The train clicked past the new intermodal Oceanside station and continued on to Del Mar, making a one-minute stop, leaving at 6:05pm, 16mins down. We made a false start leaving, and had to stop again as some passengers were slow getting off. In fact, half the train emptied out at this point. We had about 100 people aboard. By the way, the first two 84-seat cars were empty, and only the last three carried passengers. Amtrak says that more 60-seaters will arrive later.

Due to padding built into all the SAN DIEGAN schedules, we managed to make up some of the loss and get to San Diego a mere five minutes late, at 6:35pm. After unloading, the equipment reversed, turned on the wye and backed down the old Pullman car track to wait until festivities at 7:30am next day.

Inside the Santa Fe station there was another surprise. The whole station had been washed and scrubbed. Ever since Jerry's snack bar and souvenir shop moved outside a while ago, the waiting room has looked decidedly better. Now, right where the snack bar had been is the new Metroliner Lounge. The seats are long wooden benches, waxed and polished, arranged in a square. A "Private" exit, and above: "To Metroliners"—a nice touch; in fact, lots of nice little touches are in this whole operation. On RTN's scale of 1 to 9, this reporter would rate the first run an "8", the lost point being for a mis-dispatched meet and a warm coach.

I didn't stay in San Diego, but returned on regular train 587, which consisted of eight cars, including two Amcafes. The contrast between the two trains was great. The 587 was jammed with more than 500 aboard. We also arrived late into L.A. due to brake problems. Still, we made up more than 15mins en route.

Next day, Monday, April 30, I was back at 2:30pm at LAUPT for the press run. This time I held a silver-colored official Amtrak invitation, whereas yesterday I paid full fare. The information booth became the check-in center for invited guests, who received little "Hello, my name is..." stickers. There was a small party in the north patio, with champagne, canapes, cheeses and strawberries.

The Metroliner boarding announcement came at 3:41pm. Finding a seat on the train, I left my coffee cup on my seat tray and went outside to take pictures. When I returned, an attendant had poured fresh coffee and left a logoed napkin and some sugar and cream. As the 4pm departure time arrived and we backed out of the station, we already were munching taco chips and avocado dip. It seems this will alternate with the skewered hors d'oeuvres we had yesterday. A promotional copy of the Los Angeles Daily News, reading "It's always a sunny day with Amtrak", was placed on each

seat. And today proved to be just that. Invited guests filled two 60-seat Metroliner Service coaches, while regular passengers went to the 84-seaters (Amtrak agonized on that decision, even tho it was just for today). Santa Fe Conductor Sam Cannon helped everyone aboard (he's no. 1 seniority of the Santa Fe Coast Line). All drinks were free today, including alcoholic beverages.

We flashed by Fullerton at 4:32pm, arriving at Anaheim at 4:40. During our one-minute stop, we overheard someone say, "What a great way to get to the ball game." We slid past the Santa Ana station at 4:48pm, and San Juan Capistrano at 5:04pm.

Today we held the main line at Serra siding, and continued moving. (Yesterday's delay was caused by a freight train occupying the siding at San Onofre.) We passed San Clemente at 5:13pm. The northbound SAN DIEGAN no. 585 was not at San Onofre; we encountered it later at Fallbrook at 5:28; it had had some signal problems.

We clicked by Oceanside at 5:31 and stopped at Del Mar at 5:44, a full five minutes early! We later passed Old Town siding at 6:12 and arrived at San Diego at 6:19pm, eleven minutes early, for a total elapsed time of 2hrs, 21mins.

Since festivities at San Diego had taken place at 7:30 this morning for the northbound run, (86 on at San Diego, 32 on at Del Mar, 8 on at Anaheim), there were only handshakes and goodbyes. But there were two things to admire while waiting for the 7:45pm departure for L.A.—the squeaky-clean Santa Fe station, and the extra-fancy, shiny Santa Fe inspection train parked on an adjacent track.

As we returned northbound, many guests thought the Amfleet 84-seat cars were old, outmoded equipment. Amtrak plans to add more 60-seat cars as they arrive, and the third one is in already. There is a rumor that Amtrak is working with the Rapid Transit District to institute mini-bus service from the L.A. train station to downtown.

We asked Amtrak's Jim Callery (VP-Sales, Washington) whether Amtrak considers these Metroliners first-class. He rubbed his chin for a moment and said, "Let's call it a premier service." On RTN's scale of 1-9, we couldn't find anything wrong today. The air conditioning in the first Metroliner Service car (21900) had been repaired, there were no delays with meets, and we arrived early. Give Amtrak a big, fat "nine".

We gained weight on the food. Let's hope Amtrak gains good ridership on this operation. We wish them well.

From the NARP Board Meeting

The NARP Board of Directors met in Washington Apr 26-28 in a session having a mixed agenda of national items and internal housekeeping. The Board met with Alex Metcalf, chief economist with British Rail; William Norman, Amtrak's executive VP of marketing and business development; and Federal Railroad Administrator John H. Riley.

Riley's upbeat presentation was one of the more promising pro-passenger statements the Board has heard in some time.

Metcalf presented his thoughts on development of corridor services in the U.S., as well as reporting on British Rail. He strongly supports an incremental approach to passenger services and particularly to high-speed corridor routes—a technique he feels has been slighted in recent U.S. high-speed studies. He said most high-speed studies have ignored the need to integrate corridor and long distance. He praised the TGV as an excellent solution for "very dense" corridor service, but said Britain's HST was a more practical solution and allows service improvements on lines that do not warrant electrification. Because many U.S. routes might not justify the 20 round-trip frequencies daily needed to justify electrification, the incremental approach has real potential here, he claimed.

Bill Norman was NARP's lunch speaker on Friday. He emphasized Amtrak's improved revenue-to-cost ratio, which he expects to approach 57% by the end of FY 84. He defended Amtrak's marketing program, for which he is responsible, and cited the gains the company has made in various statistical measures. Large display panels around the room were used to show current and planned advertising and promotional activities, including an increasing emphasis upon local route-specific advertising.

Norman acknowledged Amtrak's lack of equipment, particularly Superliners, for the Western trains, and said Amtrak was "look-

ing at" the possibility of equipping one train with Heritage cars. However, because the public responds favorably to Superliners, they would not want a mixed consist of Heritage and Superliner cars.

Saturday's business session included committee reports, budget review and approval, and election of NARP officers. The NARP office was authorized to continue its steps toward acquiring a computer system. The Board also agreed to establish a more uniform procedure for the election of directors within each region. Candidates' statements and ballots will be mailed to each region by the national office and returned for counting by appropriate observers in each region.

Meeting with the Board on Saturday, John Riley was one of the first Federal rail officials to recognize Amtrak's pressing need for more cars. Riley, who also serves as a member of the Amtrak Board of Directors, is a true rail consumer who rides trains frequently, and has a record of fighting for passenger services as an aide to a Minnesota Senator. Riley's comments on marketing and equipment acquisition were well-received by the NARP Board, which shares similar views.

The Board held a closed-door session, reportedly to allow directors an opportunity to air differences of opinion over the way NARP operates. One of the topics, according to observers, was the extent to which directors air their differences in the "public press" rather than at Board sessions. Results of this session were reportedly inconclusive.

In elections of officers, Jack Martin was reelected president, over challenger George Tyson. John Kirkwood was reelected vice president, over challenger Kevin Gregoire. Andrea Banks was voted secretary; incumbent George Tyson withdrew to run for president. Joe Horning was relected treasurer. The following were added to the Executive Committee: Orren Beatty, George Tyson, Sam Stokes, Kevin Gregoire, Andrew Selden, Ron Boardman and Kathy Johnson. Ten at-large directors were elected: Orren Beatty, Edward Bennett, Trav Burgess, Dorothy Eweson, Ray Hannon, Jack Kemp, Lee McIlvana, Ronald Sheck, Gene Skoropowski, and John Heffner.

* * *

Some randomly selected comments from the meeting:

BritRail's Alex Metcalf said there is an "interesting potential" for sleeping car service on a number of overnight intercity runs in the U.S.

Bill Norman: Amtrak will put Amdinettes on all short distance trains with a run time of five hours or more, but conversion of Amcafes to Amdinettes will take time, and we won't see the dinettes everywhere at once.

Bill Norman: All-Aboard America fares will be permanent, but rates and seat availability will change with the season and demand.

Bill Norman: Changes for this summer include menu revisions (more freshly-prepared items, children's menu items, first class service goodies such as free wine and cheese basket, stationery, etc.). After June, there will be only a single price for economy rooms, whether there are one or two occupants.

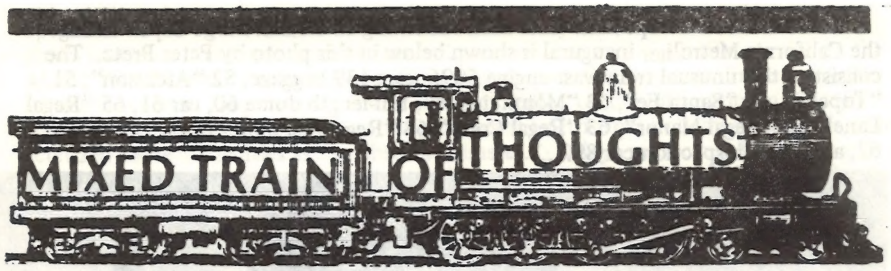
The next NARP Board meeting will be in Kansas City Oct 5-6.

What's Doing at Beech Grove

A recent list of cars stored for possible HEP conversions lists 5 baggage-dorms, 7 16/4 sleepers, 18 10/6 sleepers, 6 lounges, 21 coaches, 14 diners, 10 dome sleepers, 5 dome lounges, and 16 dome coaches, for a total of 102. After the list was made, the 6 lounges were definitely switched into the HEP program. They are cars 3850-3855.

In March, Beech Grove made two HEP conversions, 6 heavy overhauls, 5 intermediate overhauls, 19 other car repairs, 5 Superliner modifications, 4 completed auto carriers, one locomotive overhaul, two locomotive repairs, and 6 Breda car assemblies.

The facility turned out 30 wreck repairs in FY 83, and budgeted for 30 more this year, but upped that to 45 because of recent wrecks. In this fiscal year, as of Mar 31, 20 wrecked cars had been repaired. In March, wreck repairs were on two Superliner cars (32035 and 34064) and one Hi-level car (39930). A separate wreck force is being set up to deal with more severely damaged cars.



ALL ABOARD AMERICA fares are being extended thru Sep 3, and are good for travel thru Oct 2. During this period, the one-zone fare remains at $175, while the two-zone price rises to $250 and the systemwide fare to $325. The discounts cannot be used in sleepers during the period Jul 1-Aug 19.....

THE SAN JOAQUIN'S discount roundtrip fares have been deemed very successful by Amtrak, and will continue indefinitely. Amtrak's William Norman announced this at his Apr 27 talk with the NARP Board. He also said that DESERT WIND roundtrip discount fares will continue to be sold thru May 31, good for travel thru Jun 4.....

THE SILVER PALM might not be funded next year by the state of Florida, NARP revealed Apr 27, and it asked Floridians to write their state legislators immediately in support of this "very successful" train. The Florida Coalition of Railroad Passengers has been leafleting passengers informing them of this problem and urging their help.....

★★★

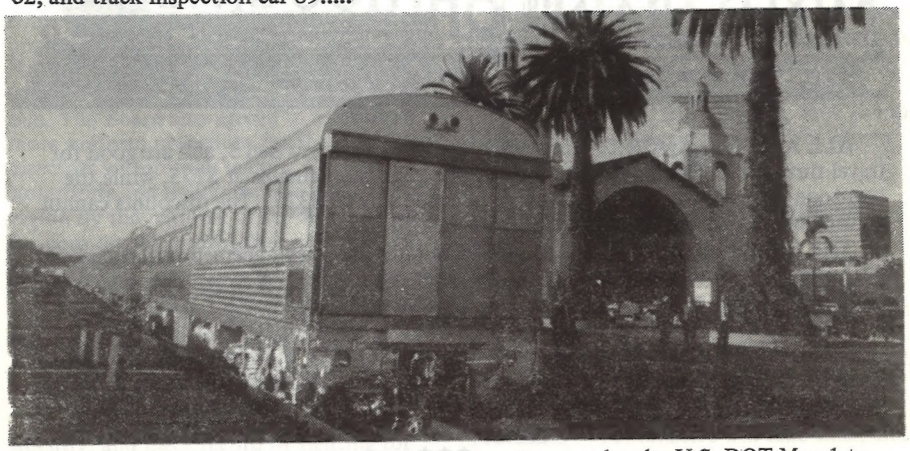
CHICAGO UNION STATION was purchased by Amtrak on May 3 for $15 million from its owners, the Milwaukee Road and Burlington Northern. They together owned half of the station, with Amtrak possessing the remaining half-interest.....

THE CALIFORNIA METROLINER has been averaging 68 passengers per trip in its first week of operation. Amtrak said that daily figures ran like this: 47, 58, 69, 79, 71 and 82.....

AMTRAK'S EQUIPMENT SHORTAGE was hammered at by NARP Executive Director Ross Capon in testimony delivered May 2 before the Senate Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee, chaired by Mark Andrews (R-ND). Capon said Amtrak is "desperately short of equipment." Capon noted that Amtrak officials frequently within the past year have cited equipment limitations as preventing Amtrak from taking advantage of particular market opportunities. In some cases, this involves the inability to supply existing trains with an adequate number of cars to meet demand. This is particularly unfortunate, given that revenues generated by reasonably full added cars would normally exceed the costs of adding and operating those cars. Amtrak says that it will run a larger consist on the SUNSET LIMITED during the coming summer to accommodate World's Fair travelers, NARP noted. This means that some other route or routes will have less equipment. Said NARP, "We note that, altho travel in Dec 1983 was higher than in Dec 1982, the SOUTHWEST LTD had one fewer coach. As a result, it posted the smallest ridership increase of all the long distance trains (1.2% vs an average of 18.8% increase for the long distance trains as a group)." In his testimony, Capon stated: "Altho Amtrak has set aside more than 100 old cars for conversion to 'Heritage' status, only 23 cars are scheduled to be converted in FY 85 *even if* Amtrak gets" the full $724 million which it has requested and which the House has already authorized. Capon said NARP believes "a strong argument can be made that Amtrak should get more than $724 million so that more of those cars could be converted in the near future, enhancing Amtrak's revenue-earning capability." He concluded, "Please support $724 million as a minimum, and closely examine the equipment issue as justification for increasing [capital] funding further."....

FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATOR John H. Riley told the NARP Board at its late-April meeting that he is aware that Amtrak has an equipment shortage. He also reportedly expressed his dissatisfaction with Amtrak's Marketing Department.....

THE SANTA FE inspection train that was sitting at the San Diego depot during the California Metroliner inaugural is shown below in this photo by Peter Bretz. The consist of this unusual train was: engine 5996; cars 139 baggage, 52 "Atchison", 51 "Topeka", 50 "Santa Fe", 53 "Mountainaire", full-length dome 60, car 61, 65 "Regal Lane", 67 "Regal Manor", 63 "Regal Crest", 68 "Regal Spa", 66 "Regal Lark", car 62, and track inspection car 89.....



HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS were given out by the U.S. DOT May 1 to 11 transportation projects in a Washington ceremony. The awards of interest to us were: to the Providence (RI) Foundation, for its successful coordination of railway, highway, transit and downtown improvements in a city rich with historic and archeological properties; the Committee to Save the Cable Cars and the City of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, for rehabilitation of the historic cable car system in a 60-bloc area; and Viggo B. Rambusch, Baltimore, for rehabilitation of Baltimore's Penn Station with special emphasis on restoration of fine stained glass domes.....

★★★

SERVICE TO MAINE was discussed by NARP's Ross Capon in May 2 testimony to the Senate Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee. Said NARP in its report of the testimony: "Capon...raised the hope that fast rail passenger service linking Amtrak's NE Corridor with Maine, New Hampshire, and Boston's northern suburbs may yet become a reality. The key is inclusion of a railroad link when Boston's Central Artery freeway (which coincidentally links North and South Stations) is depressed in a billion-dollar 90% federally funded project being pushed hard by Massachusetts officials. (Currently, passengers transferring between North and South Stations must make two or three changes, depending on whether they use direct taxi service or two subway lines.) Capon noted in his testimony that, 'because the design phase of the Central ARtery project will last a few years, there may yet be an opportunity to get the rail link included in the [freeway depression] project, and we hope the Subcommittee will be receptive to this if things develop favorably.' Capon cited lack of progress on the rail connection to date as 'one specific example...of our nation's anti-rail/pro-highway bias.' He called it 'a particularly blatant example of today's generation passing on to our grandchildren a recipe for bigger and bigger traffic jams and growing highway fatality rates while missing an opportunity to put a substantial volume of business, commuter, and holiday travel onto the much safer rail mode.' ".....

AMTRAK PRESIDENT CLAYTOR spoke to the NARP Region V meeting in Charlotte NC recently, at the invitation of NARP President Jack Martin. Among his remarks, released by Martin were the following: He said unequivocally that Amtrak will never build another Superliner; however, it is possible that some time in the future some Western trains might run in two sections and they would then convert another Western train to low-level equipment with domes. Apparently the best candidate for sectional

operation would be the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR. Claytor said the three twin-unit diners had beeen retained. Amtrak has had great success with the buffet service on the AUTO TRAIN, greatly reducing costs, and may convert the twin-unit diners for buffet service on another long distance route. He commented on the difficulties in Chicago and with the Western long distance trains during the Christmas holiday season. He characterized those difficulties as "an absolute disaster." Delays were caused in part by reduced speed limits on a number of routes, including 40mph on the whole Union Pacific and 45mph on the BN Northern line. He conceded that trains froze between the coach yard and Union Station. He said a number of changes had been made in an attempt to avoid future difficulties in Chicago, but said that he doubted that Amtrak could ever contend totally successfully with the extremes of weather than had been encountered. Even the pipes in the 2-year old commissary in Chicago froze—that problem has been rectified.....

TRI-WEEKLY TRAINS were the subject of another comment by Claytor at the Charlotte meeting. He said, in response to questions, that the three tri-weekly trains would go daily if that would not increase the subsidy requirements. None currently would meet that test, but Amtrak is looking at the EAGLE, which is the closest, and might perhaps be converted during peak seasons. The CARDINAL schedule change will permit it to connect with everything in Chicago and provide a daylight run thru the New River Gorge. They expect great improvement in its ridership and finances, but don't know whether it will be enough to permit daily operation. He would reroute the SUNSET thru Dallas but the railroad isn't there at present—perhaps 2-3 years away. If they could reroute it, its financial improvement might be enough to permit daily operation. ....

THE 115th ANNIVERSARY of the driving of the Golden Spike will be celebrated in Utah May 10 at the Golden Spike Historic Site, 30 miles west of Brigham City. The two replica steam locos "Jupiter" and 119 returned to daily service there May 1 .....

GREAT AMERICAN RR SHOW was held in New Orleans the weekend of May 5-6, with excursion rides over the Huey Long Bridge.....

News in this issue is updated thru May 7, 1984.

EDITORIAL (Continued from page 7)

its constituents in explaining its "dumb" moves and in attempting to smooth over ruffled feathers has been very poor.

Something must be done about this problem. The rate at which it continues and spreads is alarming. There has been some crisis of this nature on the burner continuously for more than a year (the most recent problem is the unknowledgeable and dictatorial imposition of the California Metroliner upon the people of Southern California, in spite of their numerous official protestations). The solution seems to be to place Amtrak decision makers in closer contact with their constituents at those parts of the system that are farthest removed from Washington headquarters—those parts with the most acute problems. One plan proposed to RTN has been to establish a Western Regional headquarters of Amtrak that would have as much power as the head office. RTN, however, favors another plan, which we wish to propose seriously in this thirteenth anniversary year of Amtrak:

RTN calls upon Amtrak to relocate its head office from Washington to a more central location in the nation—such as Chicago or Denver—where it can more readily get a proper systemwide perspective on its domain. While the property that Amtrak owns is mostly in the Northeast Corridor, that piece of real estate can continue to be operated by its NE Corridor division, as it has been in the past.

This seems to us a simple solution, and it really doesn't require much explanation once the idea is set forth. The outcome of the move should be an Amtrak that is more responsive to the whole system and can view the whole passenger map from a new and less distorted perspective. And if Amtrak wants to act more like a private corporation, what better way to do so than to get away from Washington, the source of Federal thinking?

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"With appropriate connecting tracks at O'Hare, Chicago could offer the same convenient air-rail combination [as Frankfurt, Germany]. In fact, with a modern, high-speed intercity rail network in place, the whole Midwest could safely, comfortably and non-disruptively shuttle millions each year from downtown to downtown and suburb to suburb without using the airline system at all."

—F.K. Plous Jr. in Crain's Chicago Business, Apr 23.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"Daylight-saving time, one of the many legacies of Benjamin Franklin to the nation, starts tomorrow...

Franklin made his proposal for a switch in time in a paper he wrote while serving as the U.S. ambassador to France during the Revolutionary War. He calculated that vast amounts of candle wax could be saved if people coordinated their activities with the sun by rising and retiring an hour later."

—San Francisco Chronicle, Apr 28.

(Then why do we set the clocks ahead?—And it is ahead in the spring; remember, spring forward, fall backward. Or is it fall forward, spring backward?)

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RAIL FANTRIPS

May 4—First of every-Friday rail excursions from Washington DC & Alexandria VA to Charlottesville VA, escorted, on the CARDINAL. See Univ of VA, Monticello, downtown shopping mall ½-mi from station. $25.50 adult. Rail Travel Ass'n, PO Box 62, Alexandria VA 22313-0062.

May 19—Benefit dinner, Hotel Florence, Pullman IL. 7:30. Dine in grand tradition of IC's Panama Limited. $30 (½ tax deductible). Limit 130 reservations. The Historic Pullman Foundation, 11111 South Forrestville Ave, Chicago IL 60628.

Jun 30 & Sep 3: Westminster to Highfield RT (6hrs); Jun 9, Sep 29, Oct 13 & 27: Union Bridge to Highfield RT (4½hrs), all on ex-Western Maryland Rwy main line. Jun 2, Jul 7, Aug 4, Sep 1, Oct 6 & 20: Walkersville to Taneytown RT (4hrs); Jun 3, Jul 8, Aug 5, Sep 2, Oct 7 & 21:Walkersville to Woodsboro RT, all on ex-PRR Frederick Secondary Line. $5-20 depending on length. Maryland Midland Railway, Inc., North Main St., PO Box A, Union Bridge MD 21791. 775-7718.

Jun 30-Jul 4: 50th Anniv. Convention, Electric Railroaders' Ass'n Inc, Toronto. At Delta Chelsea Inn. Museum trip, streetcar trip, banquet, Buffalo trip. ERA, Inc., c/o William J. Madden, 28-53 Utopia Parkway, Flushing NY 11358.

Jul 13-15: Iron Horse Festival, Logansport IN. Model RR displays, hot air balloon races, RR spike driving contest, steam excursions antique auto show,food fest, parade, etc. 24-hour festival hotline (219) 722-IRON. Steam excursions tickets by mail $5 adult before Jul 10, from: Iron Horse Festival, Train Tickets, PO Box 407, Logansport IN 46947.

Jul 21-29: Circle tour, Montreal/Stowe/NYC/Niagara Falls/Toronto. $795 double occup. Other tours available. Info from America by Rail, 16168 Center Rd, East Lansing MI 48823. 339-8854.

Aug 31-Sep 4: Labor Day Weekend Rail Cruise, So.Cal. to Flagstaff, Lake Powell, Glen Canyon Dam. On SW LIMITED & motor coach. $350 coach, $430 econ single, $395 econ double, $485 deluxe double. Pacific RR Society, PO Box 2858, Riverside CA 92516. (714) 684-7458.

Sep 7,21,Oct 5,19, Nov 2 departures, 11-day New Orleans World's Expo & Cajun Connection. $1395 up. Let's Travel Tours, 3784 Elizabeth St, PO Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516. 787-8350.

Oct 20: UP 3985 excursion Denver-Laramie over Sherman Hill. Diesel on Colo. portion of trip. $75. Intermountain Chapter, National Railway Historical Society, PO Box 5181 Terminal Annex, Denver CO 80217.

Send large SASE when responding to listings. One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full into to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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STAMFORD CT Aug 10-11 1984. Annual convention and show of the National Association of Timetable Collectors. Friday Aug 10: open to NAOTC members and registered dealers ONLY, Saturday Aug 11 open to the public from 9am to 3pm. Over 60 tables available to NAOTC Members and Railroad paper dealers ONLY. Complete details from Max Brunswick, Chairman, 155 West Rock Avenue, New Haven CT 06515. The location will be the modern Marriott Hotel, next to Amtrak/Metro North rail station in Stamford. Plan to attend America's largest paper-only show. Saturday admission $2 per person. The NAOTC Annual Convention is held in the Northeast only once every three years. Don't wait till 1987 to see this outstanding sale of rail, trolley, bus, air timetables, Employee Timetables, Guides, Postcards and all transportation paper.

Keep up with news about the Empire Builder, the North Star, 403(b) service and general coverage. Minnesota Rail Passenger News, 6/year for $5.00 from: MinnARP (RTN), Box 375, Minneapolis MN 55440-0375.

June 11, 1984—Traction Fans: Chartered 6-hr tour over lines of Chicago CTA using 1926 Cincinnati built heavyweights 4271 & 4272. $10 per person. Limited space available. SSAE: Rocky Mtn RR Club, c/o Erwin Chaim, V.P., 560 Emerson St., Denver, Colorado 80218.

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TO THE Amtrak Board of Directors: 18 U.S.C. 6 provides that "a corporation in which the United States has a proprietary interest" constitutes an "agency" for the purpose of title 18 of the Code. Amtrak's balance sheet indicates that more than 90% of the corporation's capitalization is owned by the United States in the form of preferred stock. Moreover, sec. 804 of Pub. L. 91-518, 84 Stat. 1340 (1970), expressly designates Amtrak a "GOVERNMENT corporation." Amtrak is, thus, clearly and undeniably an "agency" for the purpose of title 18. I petition the Amtrak board of directors hereby to state by formally passed resolution that Amtrak is indeed an "agency" as defined in sec. 6 of title 18 of the Code. Alfred E. Ehm, 170 Carousel Drive, San Antonio, TX 78227.

"Issues in American Rail Travel," RTN's little book on important problems with America's rail passenger revival, is almost ready for publication. Price will be $4.50, which includes relevant tax & post. Full details given later in RTN. PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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EAST COAST REPORT (continued from page 2)

The Long Island Rail Road provided 11 additional early afternoon trains out of Penn Station on Apr 16 and 17 for Passover and on Good Friday, Apr 20, for the Easter Weekend. During the Mets baseball season the LIRR will make extra stops at Shea Stadium on scheduled eastbound and westbound Port Washington Line trains. Passengers on other lines can reach Shea by changing at Woodside. The ball park is also directly served by the no. 7 Flushing Line.

The LIRR's on-time performance for March dropped 3.9% to 88.8%, compared with February, due mainly to severe March storms, with 327 trains late on Mar 9 and 231 late on Mar 29. On Mar 13, 130 trains were late because of Amtrak signal problems in New York.

★★★

On Metro North, President Peter Stangl predicted that the railroad would find seats for the 400-600 daily Harlem and Hudson Line standees "by July or so", if the new M-3 cars continue to arrive on schedule from the Budd Company.

On the New Haven Line, the solution is not so easy, with about 900 to 1300 morning standees on trains into Grand Central. Some additional diesel cars will be assigned to these trains after the opening of the Upper Harlem electrification at the end of April. Ten cafe cars will be converted to seating, tho Connecticut Governor William O'Neill has said that he will not allow the cafe cars owned by his state to receive the same treatment. Nearly all the standees board the trains within New York State, close in to Grand Central.

★★★

Off-hour waiting areas, usually located near the token booths, have become a regular safety feature in many New York City subway stations. At my local station, 68th Street and Lexington Avenue, the recently-completed facility is located over the tracks on the upper level concourse. Plate glass windows allow patrons to watch for their trains, southbound only, approaching the station. Northbound patrons need to be track stars, as the trains are not visible until they have nearly halted at the platform. Reconstruction of the concourse took two years.

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